

**Standard 8-4:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of Reconstruction on the people and government of South Carolina.

**8-4.1** Explain the purposes of Reconstruction with attention to the economic, social, political, and geographic problems facing the South, including reconstruction of towns, factories, farms, and transportation systems; the effects of emancipation; racial tension; tension between social classes; and disagreement over voting rights. (H, G, P, E)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students explained how the Civil War affected South Carolina's economy, including the destruction of plantations, towns, factories, and transportation systems (3-4.3). They also summarized the effects of Reconstruction in South Carolina, including the development of public education, racial advancements and tensions, and economic changes (3-4.4).

In 5th grade, students summarized the aims of Reconstruction and explained the effects of Abraham Lincoln's assassination on the course of Reconstruction (5-1.1). They also summarized the provisions of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, including how the amendments protected the rights of African Americans and sought to enhance their political, social, and economic opportunities (5-1.2). They compared the economic and social effects of Reconstruction on different populations (5.14) and explained the purpose and motivations behind the rise of discriminatory laws and groups and their effects on the rights and opportunities of African Americans in different regions of the United States (5-4.5).

In United States History, students will summarize the effects of Reconstruction on the southern states and the roles of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments in that era. (USHC-4.4).

**It is essential for students to know:**

The Reconstruction policies of the federal government significantly impacted society in South Carolina after the Civil War. Each plan had a slightly different purpose. However the purposes of all of the plans were primarily social and political. Although South Carolina faced significant economic problems as a result of the Civil War, the federal government did not believe it was its responsibility to rebuild the South economically. Consequently the Reconstruction policies of the national government did not include the reconstruction of towns, factories, farms, and transportation systems. This was the responsibility of individuals and of state government which did not have the money to address these needs.

The purpose of President Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction was to end the war as quickly as possible and was formulated before the end of the fighting. By requiring that only 10% of the population swear allegiance to the Union before they could reconstitute their state governments and send representatives to Congress, Lincoln hoped to convince southern states, including South Carolina, to surrender. Lincoln's plan had a political purpose-to restore the southern states into full political union with the other states. Lincoln also required state governments to implement significant social change by recognizing the end of slavery. Lincoln's assassination did not significantly change this Presidential Reconstruction plan. President Johnson basically continued Lincoln's 10% policy with the additional purpose of humiliating the southern elite by requiring that they individually request a pardon of the president and ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment that freed the slaves. However, he quickly granted pardons to most of the prominent southerners who requested them.

While presidential Reconstruction plans had their own objectives, by the time of Congress's plan there were other objectives. The purpose of Congress in passing their Reconstruction plan was the protection

of the rights of the newly freed slaves as well as the protection of the Republican's political power. During the months that Congress was not in session, the South Carolina legislature passed Black Codes and elected former Confederates to Congress. Increased violence against the freedmen and President Johnson's opposition to Congressional efforts to secure the rights of the freedmen by his veto of the Freedman's Bureau bill and his opposition to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment significantly changed the course of Reconstruction policy. In an effort to protect the rights of freedmen, Congress refused to admit returning Southern officials to Congress. As a result of the violence in the South against African Americans and the actions of President Johnson, the so-called "Radical Republicans" won a majority in the congressional elections of 1866 and passed their own plan for Reconstruction. This congressional plan called for military occupation of the former Confederacy, splitting it into five military districts. South Carolina was in the second military district. Each district had a military governor and the army was used to enforce its provisions. Congress impeached Johnson to ensure that as commander in chief he could not undermine its efforts. Although he was not removed from office, Johnson's power was curtailed. The Union army attempted to enforce the Reconstruction policy and the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments.

Ratification of and assurances that they would abide by the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment was required of southern states before they could form new governments. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment effected **emancipation** of the slaves throughout the United States and brought profound social change for the southern African Americans. Freedmen worked to consolidate their families and communities, establish a network of churches and other autonomous institutions, claim equal citizenship, get an education and carve out as much independence as possible in their lives. Although freedom brought significant **social change** for African Americans, initially there was little change for the white population. Social classes remained fairly stable despite the loss of economic status by the planter elite. White South Carolinians resented most actions of African Americans who were now free of the imposed submissiveness of slavery and some white southerners feared retaliation by their former slaves. Racial tensions escalated. The Black Codes demonstrated that white South Carolinians were unwilling to recognize the social and political rights of the newly freed slaves. Both groups preferred to maintain a social distance that slavery had not allowed. African Americans left the white churches for congregations of their own. They moved from the slave quarters to plots away from the Big House and established their own communities. This separation and loss of control over African Americans caused anxiety among whites to escalate. The formation of terrorist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan reflected racial tension and the determination of the white population to keep the African American population in 'its place' socially, politically, and economically.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was designed to protect the political and social rights of freedmen from this intimidation. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment overturned the *Dred Scott* decision by recognizing the citizenship of African Americans; it upheld the right of all citizens to "equal protection" before the laws and "due process" of law. The amendment required that 2/3 of the Congress vote to grant amnesty to ex-Confederates before they could hold public office. It included a provision that was designed to force states to grant political rights to freedmen by reducing representation for states that did not allow African Americans to vote. However, this provision proved ineffective. The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed to ensure that the **right to vote** of *all* male citizens, in the North as well as in the South, would not be denied based on "race, creed or previous condition of servitude." The amendment was also motivated by the desire of the Republican Party to secure its political power in the South. The Southern vote, largely made up of the vote of African Americans, had contributed to Grant's election in 1868. South Carolina refused to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments. As a result of Congressional Reconstruction, the military governor of Military District 2 required South Carolina to hold a convention to write a new state constitution (8-4.3). However, whites boycotted the election of delegates to the constitutional convention.

Reconstruction had little economic impact on the South's recovery from the devastation of the Civil War. The economy continued to rest on agriculture and cotton, but now depended on sharecropping rather than slave labor. The national government did not see its role as taking an active hand in managing the

economy until the 20<sup>th</sup> century and so the national government did not rebuild the war-torn region economically. The South remained in a state of economic depression well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**It is not essential for students to know:**

Students do not need to know the other provisions of Lincoln or Johnson's plan for Reconstruction. They do not need to know that the Wade Davis Bill was an early attempt on the part of Congress to have some input in the plan for Reconstruction. They do not need to know that the Wade Davis Bill required 50% of the former Confederates to pledge their loyalty to the Union or that Lincoln pocket vetoed it. They do not need to know what a pocket veto is. Students do not need to know that Jefferson Davis was imprisoned for two years and charged with treason, but was never prosecuted or that he was released to retire to his plantation in Mississippi. Students do not need to know that the Congress pardoned ex-Confederates in a series of Amnesty Acts required by the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment and that by the end of the Reconstruction period in 1877 only 500 had not been pardoned. These Amnesty Acts helped the southern whites to regain control of their state governments. Students do not need to know that Johnson was impeached for violating the Tenure of Office Act when he fired Secretary of War Edwin Stanton or that the vote to remove him from office fell one vote short of the 2/3 required for removal from office.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments will require students to **explain** the purposes of Reconstruction policy. Assessments may also require student to **compare** the purposes of presidential and congressional plans for Reconstruction. They may also be asked to **identify examples** of how Reconstruction policy met the social, political economic and geographic problems that faced South Carolina at the end of the Civil War. Students should be able to **summarize** how emancipation led to racial tension and tension between classes over social equality and voting rights.